

Bokoch V. Political determination of the religious situation in the annexed Crimea

The religious situation in the annexed Crimea, which takes place under the influence of the political factors, is analysed. It is shown that the introduction of the Russian religious politics in the peninsula is accompanied by the rude violations of human rights and freedoms, in particular, the right to freedom of the conscience and religion. The Crimean Tatars who profess Islam, as well as the clerics and believers of the other religions, who have pro-Ukrainian political orientations, have the biggest problems with ensuring this right. Russian authorities in the Crimea managed to convert the part of the Crimean Muslim Tatars to their own side, which led to political and religious differences within their environment. Most of them remained in pro-Ukrainian positions, did not recognize the results of the “referendum,” condemned the Russian aggression in the Crimea, advocated its return to Ukraine. Political differences among the Crimean Tatars have deepened the schism in Islam. One part of the Muslim religious organizations began to focus on the Russian spiritual centres, the other one created the spiritual management of the Muslims of the Crimea in mainland Ukraine. In the annexed Crimea, almost all religions and their clergymen undergo harassment and persecution, except for the Orthodox, subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate. It is noted that in order to achieve the political goals – the recognition of the Crimea as the Russian territory, the adoption of the Russian citizenship, re-subordination of the religious organizations to the Russian spiritual centres, the displacement of pro-Ukrainian religious organizations from the territory of the peninsula – the Russian authorities introduced their reregistration. The restrictions on the freedom of the conscience and religion, the religious harassment and persecution are also recorded by the international human rights organizations. The general conclusion that the normalization of the religious and church life in the Crimea is possible provided that it is returned to Ukraine is drawn.

Key words: Crimea, annexation, politics, religious processes, Crimean Tatars, religion, religious organizations.